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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
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Note verbale dated 2 June 1997 from the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations (Vienna) addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations (Vienna) presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to principle 4 of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space* on behalf of the Government of the United States of America.

Principle 4 provides that a State launching a nuclear power source into outer space shall inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations on how States may obtain the results of the safety assessment prior to that launch. In accordance with principle 4, the United States of America wishes to provide the information below.

The Cassini spacecraft is scheduled for launch, on its interplanetary mission to Saturn, in October 1997. The spacecraft will carry three radioisotope thermoelectric generators (RTGs) to provide on-board electrical power and regulate the temperature for spacecraft operation and scientific instruments.

Pursuant to the national environmental policy act (NEPA), the United States of America has conducted a thorough environmental assessment and an extensive safety analysis for the Cassini mission. The results of the safety assessment are publicly available and can be obtained by contacting Mr. Mark Dahl, Office of Space Science, United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, D.C. 20546.

* General Assembly resolution 47/68 of 14 December 1992.